

To Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 1531 without my signature.

This bill would undermine the existing California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE), weaken the ability of the state to establish minimum standards for high school diplomas, and diminish ongoing efforts to ensure that these students are receiving the assistance they deserve to successfully complete the exit exam. Under current law, students already have up to six different opportunities to pass the exit exam. Allowing school districts to offer alternative assessments at this time sends the wrong message to students, parents, teachers, and administrators that we do not expect students to achieve at the highest levels.

I believe that every student can learn, and every student can graduate high school with the skills they need to go to college or enter the workforce. We have a responsibility to each of our students to believe in them, and not to have low expectations.

This is why the 2005 Budget Act includes \$70 million for additional support services and instruction for students most at risk of not passing the CAHSEE. I believe that targeted state resources should continue to be focused on helping students prepare for the exam, rather than developing alternative assessments.

For these reasons, I am unable to sign this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger